

Hanoi, the Lao Dong Party and the Insurgency in South Vietnam

1. To appreciate the relationship between the Lao Dong Communist Party in Hanoi and the insurgency in South Vietnam, it is essential to appreciate the way the Party thinks of its political role and to avoid making the mistake of thinking that Hanoi's involvement in the southern struggle is a simple function of the number of ethnic North Vietnamese fighting in South Vietnam.

2. The Lao Dong views itself as the Communist Party of Vietnam, not just of North Vietnam, and thinks of the DRV as the "rightful" government of all Vietnam, not just that portion lying north of the 17th Parallel. Four key members of the Lao Dong's eleven member Politburo are ethnic southerners, including the Party's Secretary-General (Le Duan), the DRV's Premier (Pham Van Dong), and the overall politico-military field commander of the war in the south (General Nguyen Chi Thanh).

3. The 1954 cease-fire agreements negotiated at Geneva effected a partition that virtually all parties involved thought would only be temporary. The Lao Dong's leaders felt cheated of full victory but believed the "southern half of their country" would soon fall under their control either by elections or, more likely, through collapse of any viable political structure in the south.

4. One of the provisions of the Geneva Agreements provided for a "regroupment of forces." Under this provision the Lao Dong -- which had absolute control over the Viet Minh movement -- brought to North Vietnam about 90,000 ethnic southerners who had fought in or supported the Viet Minh or were members of Viet Minh families. The Lao Dong also left behind in South Vietnam a covert network of Communist cadre.

5. By the summer of 1956 it was obvious that reunification elections were not going to be held and South Vietnam was not going to collapse. The Lao Dong Central Committee accordingly decided to instigate a campaign of political subversion in South Vietnam ("illegal struggle") to generate pressures capable of collapsing the Saigon Government.

6. Two administrative steps were taken to implement this decision. First, the stay-behind cadre network was directed to resume political agitation and organizational activity. Second, the Party Politburo created an entity known as the "Reunification Department" and put it in charge of General Nguyen Van Vinh, an alternate member of the Party's Central Committee and (now) a Deputy Chief of Staff of the North Vietnamese Army.

7. General Vinh's Reunification Department was given administrative control over all of the 90,000-odd 1954 regroupes, i. e., the ethnic southerners who had served with the Viet Minh (and their families) and now lived in North Vietnam. These southerners were screened and, in increasing numbers, selected, indoctrinated, trained and returned to South Vietnam to assist in building the Communists' southern organization.

8. In May 1959 the Lao Dong's Central Committee decided to move from "illegal struggle" to intensive armed action -- a war of national liberation, a decision formally ratified at the Third Congress of the Lao Dong in September 1960. The scale of Communist activity in South Vietnam began to take quantum jumps soon thereafter, as did the rate of infiltration.

9. Until late 1963 or early 1964, the infiltrators dispatched from North Vietnam were virtually all ethnic southerners, trained by the Party and subject to Party discipline. These returnees build the Viet Cong organization and still run it today. In their organizational and recruiting work they played on and appealed to genuine local grievances whenever and wherever they could and many whom they brought into the movement were not Communists, but the insurgency itself was under absolute Party control from its inception and remains so today.

10. The organizational structure of the Viet Cong movement is shown on the attached chart. It is run through the so-called People's Revolutionary Party, which is simply the name used by the Lao Dong in South Vietnam. Thus, there is and always has been a direct, vertical Party command line from the Politburo in Hanoi to the smallest hamlet cell in South Vietnam.

11. The above statement of the relationship between Hanoi and the war in the south is based on captured documents, defector and prisoner interrogations, agent reports and information obtained through various sensitive collection methods. We believe the total weight of this evidence proves the above-outlined case beyond any reasonable doubt.